



October 21, 2020

Mayor Tory and members of the Executive Committee,

My name is Abigail Doris. I'm a Registered Early Childhood Educator and the Executive Coordinator for the Toronto Community for Better Child Care (TCBCC). We are a network of more than 200 non-profit child care programs across the city who collectively champion for affordable, accessible, quality child care programs in Toronto.

The child care community applauds the City for its swift response to the pandemic and how it prioritized the health and well-being of young children and their families. The Recovery and Rebuild report by the Toronto Office outlines many progressive recommendations which we support wholeheartedly. We appreciate the extensive community consultations that have informed these recommendations, and we feel the report offers a promising approach to recovery.

We do, however, want to urge the City to be bold in its approach to child care when envisioning how we should rebuild our city and recover from the global pandemic. This pandemic has shown us the critical role that access to quality child care programs plays in supporting the economic and social infrastructure of Toronto, especially in supporting women's ability to engage in the labour market.

The pandemic has deeply impacted the Toronto child care community and the children, families and communities we work with. The fragile child care system that existed prior to the pandemic isn't a system we can return to, nor should we. Despite the incredible challenges COVID-19 has brought to our city, it has also provided us with an opportunity to be transformative in our approach to building communities and centralizing support for the most vulnerable members of our city.

We want to urge you to take on a greater leadership role in approaching these five critical issues to ensure that the families of Toronto will have access to the child care programs they depend on:

- 1) **Intergovernmental Negotiation:** Toronto is a respected leader across Canada and can break new ground in intergovernmental relations/agreements with child care and early years programs. Toronto should be engaging in negotiation with the Federal and Provincial government to ensure that the City's strong principles, objectives and plans are reflected in any new intergovernmental funding agreements. Toronto has strong principles in supporting a non-profit child care system and these need to be embedded

in all new funding agreements to ensure that large scale commercial child care corporations are not taking advantage of public funding.

- 2) **Reject Proposed CCEYA Changes:** The Provincial Government has proposed significant changes to the *Child Care and Early Years Act* that, if passed, will have a detrimental impact on Toronto's child care programs. The proposed changes will significantly weaken regulations that affect the quality and safety of child care programs and leave room for unregulated child care to expand. We recommend that city staff report on these regulation changes and the City make a submission by November 22, 2020 to the Provincial government.
- 3) **Advocate for a Trilateral Agreement:** The time for transformative approaches to child care funding and policy is here. We recommend that the City advocates for a trilateral child care agreement with the Ontario and Federal government, similar to previous intergovernmental agreements on immigration and settlement (COIA, the Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement. This has the potential to be groundbreaking with the recent promise of a publicly funded, Pan-Canadian Child Care System by the current Federal government.
- 4) **Expand the Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy:** The City of Toronto Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy needs to not only continue, but to be updated and expanded to provide the benchmarks, costs and direction for the new funding. The Safe Restart funding provided by the Federal government is meant to sustain non-profit child care programs, however, the City needs to provide further funding dedicated to operating costs; increase affordability for families; decent work/wages for Early Childhood Educators; expand inclusion for all young children; and expand non-profit child care programs.
- 5) **Sector Consultation and Partnership:** The development of an ongoing table that includes the non-profit child care community, Toronto Children's Services and members of city council to ensure greater accountability and transparency.

We call on you to prioritize the needs of children, families and communities impacted by COVID-19 and to demonstrate your leadership role while advocating at all levels of government for a stronger, more accessible, affordable, quality child care system.

Be Well,  
Abigail Doris, RECE  
Executive Coordinator, Toronto Community for Better Child Care